# K—Debility

## 1NC

### 1NC—Debility K

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#### Activist Mia Mingus recounts her experience with the medical-industrial complex:

One of my earliest memories of consciously claiming my body for myself was deciding not to wear my brace any more. For years I wore a brace on my right leg; I had to get them re-made or re-fitted almost every year as I grew out of them. I had some that went from my foot to my knee and some that went all the way up to my hip. For a long time I did not question my brace. It was just the way things were, like stairs, people staring at me when I walked, or feeling ashamed of my disability. Among many things, my braces were hot (often made of plastic and or fiberglass), and in the Virgin Islands Caribbean weather, they itched, pinched my skin, and gave me painful blisters which I would try to prevent by wearing more socks or padding. Like my parents, I had come to believe that I “needed” to wear my brace. But something began to change as I entered middle school. I began to ask questions: why should I have to wear something so painful everyday that is supposed to “help” me? If they can send a man to the moon, then surely they can make a comfortable and useful brace for my leg? In the beginning I had small acts of resistance: the daily morning fight about putting my brace on or bringing a change of shoes and changing out of it once I was at school--this went on for years. Finally I was “allowed” to not wear my brace some days, and it was not until I was in college that I was able to choose not to wear my brace everyday.

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**Ableism’s constitutional divide forms the blueprint for modernity – this culminates in genocidal violence and targeting of marginalized bodies – this violence can only maintain power through our silence**

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II. “Ableist Relations”

**Central to** regimes of **ableism are two core elements that feature irrespective of its localised enactment, namely the notion of the normative** (and normate individual) **and the enforcement of a constitutional divide between perfected naturalized humanity and the aberrant, the unthinkable, quasi-human hybrid and therefore non-human. This** constitution **provides the** layout, the **blueprint for the scaling and marking of bodies and the ordering of their terms of relation. It is not possible to have a concept of difference without Ableism.** Let’s take each of these two elements separately and explore them more closely. The Able/Not-Able Divide **It is necessary to establish and enforce a constitutional divide. The divide is at the levels of ontology, materiality and sentiency**. I wish to focus on the constitutionality of that divide between the normal and the pathological and mechanisms of ordering. This analysis is influenced by the proposals advanced by Bruno Latour in We Have Never been Modern. Latour speaks of the practices of translation and purification: … ‘**translation’, creates mixtures between entirely new types of being, hybrids of nature and culture. The second, by ‘purification’: creates two entirely distinct ontological zones: that of human beings on the one hand; that of nonhumans on the other** (10 - 11). The devices of **translation and purification can assist us to grapple with that which seems ‘unholdable’ and elusive; the uncontainability of the disabled body**. ‘Translation’ is based on the notion that **structures or networks are not obvious or self-contained**. Latour uses the example of a chain flowing from the upper atmosphere, industrial strategies and onto the concerns of government and greenies. ‘**Purification’ in contrast, engages in the creation of divides of ontological distinctions, which espouse a foundational** (almost first cause) **self-evidence**. Here, Latour cites that partition between nature (as self contained), nonhumans and culture (created and driven by humans). **This ‘modern critical stance’**, as Latour calls it, **acts as the ethos or template of modernity.** In the context of ableism, Latour’s schema proves helpful. The processes and practices of translation cannot be separated from the creation of that ordering category termed ‘disability’. For many people deemed disabled, in the world of technoscience their relationship with non-human actants has been profoundly cyborgical and hybridisable (for example the use of communication and adaptive devices, implants and transplants). As such the networks of association between human – non human (sentient beings and machines) have always been and increasingly are pushing the boundaries of the practices of purification. **The disabled body induces a fear as being a body out of control because of its appearance of uncontainability. The practices of purification insist on this being the case. Ableism’s constitutional divide posits two distinct and entirely clear ontological zones: disabled and abled (normate). Latour explains …without the first set, the practices of purification would be fruitless or pointless. Without the second, the work of translation would be slowed down, limited, or even ruled out. … So long as we consider these two practices of translation and purification separately, we are truly modern –** that is willingly subscribe to the critical project, even though that project is developed only through the proliferation of hybrids down below. **As soon as we direct our attention simultaneously to the work of purification and the work of hybridization [translation], we immediately stop being wholly modern, and our future begins to change**. (11) **The challenge then is to look beyond social context, at the interactivity between the processes and techniques of purification and translation,** in particular to investigate what this interactivity clarifies and obfuscates. Even though Latour claims that purification is not an ideology in disguise, I would assert that the **existence of processes of purification creates a simulation if you like, of the conditions of naturalism.** Latour’s discussion of whether relations are conscious and unconscious, or are illusion and reality is an important one. He concludes that **moderns are not unaware of what they do; rather it is the holding steadfast to dichotomies, the divides, which makes possible the processes of translation.** We can by analogy, argue that **matters of intentionality or discourse and so forth, are not critical to the emerging technologies of ableism, but rather it is the act of holding stoically to the distinction between ableness and disabledness.** In contemporary developments in high-tech and biotechnologies, it is occasionally possible to witness the glitches in the purview of purification, whether that is in the debates over transhumanism, xenotransplantation or the emergent of new ‘life’ in the form of artificial intelligences (A.I’s). The confusion about where human life begins and ends harks back to the Enlightenment era where philosophers like Locke inquired “What is It?” in trying to make sense of the humanness of changelings (Campbell; Locke,). The fortunes of techno-science continue to disrupt the fixity of defining disability and normalcy especially within the arenas of law and bioethics. Whilst anomalous bodies are undecidable in being open to endless and differing interpretations, an essentialised disabled body is subjected to constant deferral – standing in reserve, awaiting and escaping able(edness) through morphing technologies and as such exists in an ontologically tentative or provisional state. **Latour points out the ultimate paradox of this modern constitutional divide is that whilst the proliferation of hybrids is allowed for, at the same time this constitution continues to deny the very existence of hybrid entities within its formulation** (Latour). Contemporary **conditions suggest that it is not the event of denial that is operational; rather it is the ‘place’ or significance given to such ambiguous entities that disrupt the rather neat demarcation zones. Practices of purification continue to rein in** (successfully or otherwise) **the chaos created by increasing ‘grey zones’ along the continuum of human/nonhuman difference**. In the governing of prostitution, Razack points to the creation of ‘anomalous zone’ to contain and tolerate the deviance. **In dealing with political prisoners, the despised, those interned in concentration camps and institutions,** Agamben indicates the **manufacturing of states of exception that exist beyond the law and spatiality to enable ‘treatments’ of those existing in the realm of a bare life.** The **significance of the enforcement of a constitutional divide, for the practices of ableism, is that such orderings are not just repressive but they are ultimately productive; they tell us stories, they contain narratives as to ‘who’ we are and how we ‘should be’.** In the closing pages of We Have Never been Modern, Latour argues that as science creates new definitions of being human, these new formations do not displace the older versions rather humanism is redistributed. I am not entirely convinced of this emergent multiplicity and expansion of ontologies of humanness. Contra Latour, Hayles argues that should sentiency be conceptualised on the basis of informationalcy this new rendering would amount to a profound shift in the theoretical markers used to categorise all life (or what is ‘life’). In this moment there is a rallying of networks scurrying to squeeze new ontological formations of dis/ability into ‘old’ systems of ordering and thus attempt to avoid re-cognising an abundance of (post marginal, post peripheral) morphisms. Anthropomorphism becomes the catch cry of ableism. As Latour rejoices: Morphism is the place where technomorpisms, zoomorphisms, phusimorphisms,ideomorphisms,theomorphisms, sociomorphisms, psyomorphisms, all come together. These alliances and their exchanges, taken together, are what define the anthropos. A weaver of morphisms - isn’t that enough of a definition? (137) What Normate … Ableist Normativity? Georges Canguilhem (69) states “every generality is the sign of an essence, and every perfection the realization of the essence … a common characteristic, the value of an ideal type”. If this is the case, **what then is the essence of normative abled(ness)? Such a question poses significant conceptual challenges including the dangers of bifurcation. It is reasonably easy to speculate about the knowingness of life forms deemed disabled in spite of the neologism of disability’s catachresis orientation**. In contrast – **able-bodied, corporeal perfectedness has an elusive core** (other than being posed as transparently average or normal). **Charting a criterion of Abled to gain definitional clarity can result in a game of circular reductionism** – saying what it is in relation to what it isn’t, that which falls away. **Disability performances are invoked to mean “any body capable of being narrated as outside the norm”** (Mitchell 17). Such as analysis belies the issue whether at their core women’s, black and queer bodies are ultimately ontologically and materially disabled? **Inscribing certain bodies in terms of deficiency and essential inadequacy privileges a particular understanding of normalcy that is commensurate with the interests of dominant groups** (and the assumed interests of subordinated groups). Indeed, the **formation of ableist relations requires the normate individual to depend upon the self of ‘disabled’ bodies being rendered beyond the realm of civility, thus becoming an unthinkable object of apprehension**. The **unruly, uncivil, disabled body is necessary for the reiteration of the ‘truth’ of the ‘real/essential’ human self who is endowed with masculinist attributes of certainty, mastery and autonomy**. The **discursive practices that mark out bodies of preferability are vindicated by abject life forms that populate the constitutive outside of the thinkable** (that which can be imagined and re-presented) **and** those **forms of existence that are unimaginable and therefore unspeakable.** The **emptying** (kenosis) **of normalcy occurs through the purging of those beings that confuse, are misrecognizable** or as Mitchell (17) describes **as “recalcitrant corporeal matter” into a bare life** (see Agamben) **residing in zone of exceptionality. This foreclosure depends on necessary unspeakability to maintain the continued operation of hegemonic power** (c.f. Butler). **For every outside there is an inside that demands differentiation and consolidation as a unity**. To borrow from Heidegger– in every aletheia (unveiling or revealedness) of representation there lies a concealedness. The **visibility of the ableist project is therefore only possible through the interrogation of the revealedness of disability/not-health and abled(ness).** Marcel Detienne summarizes this system of thought aptly: **[Such a] … system is founded on a series of acts of partition whose ambiguity, here as elsewhere, is to open up the terrain of their transgression at the very moment when they mark off a limit. To discover the complete horizon of a society’s symbolic values, it is also necessary to map out its transgressions, its deviants** ( ix). Viewing the disabled body as simply matter out of place that needs to dispensed with or at least cleaned up is erroneous. The disabled body has a place, a place in liminality to secure the performative enactment of the normal. Detienne’s summation points to what we may call the double bind of ableism when performed within western neo-liberal polities. The double bind folds in on itself – for whilst claiming ‘inclusion’, ableism simultaneously always restates and enshrines itself. On the one hand, discourses of equality promote ‘inclusion’ by way of promoting positive attitudes (sometimes legislated in mission statements, marketing campaigns, equal opportunity protections) and yet on the other hand, ableist discourses proclaim quite emphatically that disability is inherently negative, ontologically intolerable – and in the end a dispensable remnant. This casting results in an ontological foreclosure wherein positive signification of disability becomes unspeakable. Disability can’t be thought of/spoken about on any other basis than the negative, to do so, to invoke oppositional discourses, is to run the risk of further pathologisation. An example of this are attempts at desiring or celebrating disability which are reduced to a fetish or facticity disorder. So to explicate ourselves out of this double bind we need to persistently and continually return to the matter of disability as negative ontology, as a malignancy, that is, as the property of a body constituted by what Michael Oliver refers to as, “the personal tragedy theory of disability.” (32) Returning to the matter of definitional clarity around Abled(ness). Robert McRuer is one of the few scholars to journey into ableism’s non-axiomatic life. He argues that ableism (McRuer refers to compulsory abled-bodiedness) emanates from everywhere and nowhere, and can only be deduced by crafty reductionisms. Contra the assertions about the uncontainability of disabled bodies which are (re)contained by the hyper prescription and enumeration, the abled body mediated through its assumption of compulsion is absent in its presence – it just is – but resists being fully deducible. Drawing on Butler’s work, McRuer writes everyone is virtually disabled, both in the sense that able-bodied norms are ‘intrinsically impossible to embody’ fully and in the sense that able-bodied status is always temporary, disability being the one identity category that all people will embody if they live long enough. What we might call a critically disability position, however, would differ from such a virtually disabled position [to engagements that have] resisted the demands of compulsory able-bodiedness … (95–96) My argument is that insofar as this conception of disability is assumed within discourses of ableism, the presence of disability upsets the modernist craving for ontological security. The conundrum disability is not a mere fear of the unknown, nor an apprehensiveness towards that which is foreign or strange. Rather, disability and disabled bodies are effectively positioned in the nether regions of ‘unthought’. For the ongoing stability of ableism, a diffuse network of thought depends upon the capacity of that network to ‘shut away’, to exteriorise, and unthink disability and its resemblance to the essential (ableist) human self. This unthought has been given much consideration through the systematisation and classification of knowledges about pathology, aberration and deviance. That which is thought about (the Abled norm) rather ironically in its delimitation becomes vacuous and elusive. In order for the notion of ableness to exist and to transmogrify into the sovereign subject, the normate individual of liberalism, it must have a constitutive outside – that is, it must participate in a logic of supplementarity. When looking at relations of disability and ableism we can expand on this idea of symbiosis, an ‘unavoidable duality’ by putting forward another metaphor, that of the mirror. Here I argue that people deemed disabled take on the performative act of mirroring in the lives of normative subjects: To be a Mirror is different from being a Face that looks back … with a range of expression and responsiveness that are responses of a Subject-in-Its-Own-Right. To be positioned as a Mirror is to be Put Out of Countenance, to Lose Face. (Narayan 141) In this respect, we can speak in ontological terms of the history of disability as a history of that which is unthought, to be put out of countenance; this figuring should not be confused with erasure that occurs due to mere absence or exclusion. On the contrary, disability is always present (despite its seeming absence) in the ableist talk of normalcy, normalization, and humanness (cf. Overboe ) on the idea of normative shadows). Disability’s truth-claims are dependent upon discourses of ableism for their very legitimization. III. Disability Imaginaries – Reconceptualising the Human? Phenomenological studies have long recognized the importance of focusing on the experience of the animated living body (der Leib), in recognition that we dwell in our bodies and live so fundamentally through them. This intensity is captured by Kalekin-Fishman: Before every action, there is a pause ... and a beginning again. The pause is for description, for mulling over the requirements of balance, for comparing the proposed action with movements that are familiar, and for explaining to myself why I can or cannot do what is at hand ... In the course of daily living, the thinking is not observable; the behavior just happens, part of what this person does naturally. The physiology of ‘a slight limp’ is part of the unmediated expression of what my ‘I’ is ... (136) In short, we cannot ‘know’ existence without being rooted to our bodies. To this extent, **it is problematic to speak of bodies in their materiality in a way that distinguishes between emotions and cognition. This generative body is shaped by relations of power, complex histories and interpreted through a bricolage of complex interwoven subjectivities. This approach to perceiving the body in terms of geist or animation can be applied to re-thinking peripheral bodies deemed disabled. It is this body that infuses the discourses and animates representations. Refusing Able(ness) necessitates a letting go of the strategy of using the sameness for equality arguments as the basis of liberal freedom. Instead of wasting time on the violence of normalization, theoretical and cultural producers could more meaningfully concentrate on developing a semiotics of exchange, an ontological decoder to recover and apprehend the lifeworlds of humans living peripherally. Ontological differences, be that on the basis of problematical signifiers of race, sex, sexuality and dis/ability, need to be unhinged from evaluative ranking and be re-cognised in their various nuances and complexities without being re-presented in fixed absolute terms. It is only then, in this release that we can find possibilities in ambiguity and resistance in marginality** (cf. de Beauvoir; hooks). Instead of asking “how do you manage not being like (the non-stated) us?” (the negation argument), **disability imaginaries think/speak/gesture and feel different landscapes not just for being –in-the-world, but on the conduction of perception, mobilities and temporalities**. Linton points out that the “kinaesthetic, proprioceptive, sensory and cognitive experiences” of disabled people as they go about their daily life has received limited attention. Nancy Mairs notes a disability gaze is imbricated in every aspect of action, perception, occurrence and knowing. In order to return bodies back to difference–in-the-human, a **re-conceptualization of knowing** (episteme) **is paramount. Only this knowledge is of a carnal kind, where thinking, sensing and understanding mutually enfold. Whilst ever present in ableist normalising dialogue, disability’s veracity is undeniably contingent upon conversations of ableism, its production and performance, to confer validity.**

#### The alternative is to challenge the discursive and epistemological formations that make liberal violence possible—this is a form of transgressive politics. Ableism only functions by making itself an invisible norm.

Campbell 98, Associate Professor in Law, Griffith Law School, Griffith University, Australia and Adjunct Professor in Disability Studies, Department of Disability Studies, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka, Fiona, THE “DISABLISED” BODY: An Inquiry into the Corporeality of “Disability” and Social Role Valorisation Theory, https://www.academia.edu/1914452/THE\_DISABLISED\_BODY\_An\_Inquiry\_into\_the\_Corporeality\_of\_Disability\_and\_Social\_Role\_Valorisation\_Theory

My method is that of discourse analysis. As Foucault (1980a: 52) explains **“the exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power”. Foucault** once **suggested** that **his work should be used as “little tool boxes**” and this thesis takes up that offer (Morris 1979: 115). Amongst other things, **Foucault’s** method of **discourse analysis enables an examination into the way “disability” is put into discourse, acknowledging that the terrain of discourse is itself a site of struggle and competition** (Foucault 1976: 11; Foucault 1984a: 110). Discourse Analysis can be undertaken in a threefold manner. First, by examining at the textual level the way “disability” is put into specific narratives - be they historical or theoretical; secondly, at a discursive level, it is possible to reveal patterns (uneven as they may be) related to the representation of “normative” corporeal ontologies and inquire into what has been excluded, minimised, been disqualified or has been considered marginal (Foucault 1980b: 82); Thirdly, at the level of the “social”, such **analysis enables** the **operation of sovereign power in the form of ideology and hegemonic technologies to be revealed exposing liberalism’s figuring of the sovereign “individual” as a fabrication**.12 In order **to name** the **violence - epistemic, psychic, ontological, physical experienced by people whose bodies have been marked as corporeally intolerable or ambiguous,** the **extrication of discursive formations can reveal the concealed “gaze” of the “underlying subject” of discourse; the pursuit/conformation of the phantomological body of the liberal self**.13 I want to show that **there is an intrinsic link between the production of sovereign selves, ways relationality and embodiment are understood and the figuring of “disablised” bodies, as othered**. The **use of Foucault’s genealogical method provides “reading strategies” to foreground discourse “in operation, in a specific historical context [and] see whose interests it serves at a particular moment” as well as unmask such things as discursive manoeuvres and recuperative strategies** (Weedon 1997: 108). As Stuart Hall puts it: …[**Discourse] examines** not only how language and representation produce meaning, but **how** the **knowledge which a particular discourse produces connects with power, regulates conduct, makes up or constructs identities and subjectivities, and defines the way certain things are represented, thought about, practised or studied.** (Hall 1997: 6) The danger otherwise, is to continue to reproduce dominant discourses that represent people with disabilities as passive victims lacking agency. As such, **this thesis is one way of asserting resistance, it is a “transgressive” piece of research, which seeks to “interrupt existing ideologies and exploitations of disability**”14 (Fine quoted in Zarb 1992: 133). In line with this thesis’ focal concerns, the objects of my investigation are those texts concerned with the discursive practices of “disability”: within “history”, social theory and service provision to people with “disabilities”. Of particular interest is Foucault’s analytics of power which employs the analysis of “dividing practices”15 that facilitate techniques of surveillance which “function ceaselessly. The gaze is alert everywhere” (Foucault 1977: 195). Foucault’s conceptualisation of the body in terms of “bio-power”, contributes to a greater understanding of the use of disciplinary practices forming the “disablised” body and the role of technician’s “gaze” which classifies, monitors, modifies and documents the “unruly”, transforming us into “subjected and practiced … ‘docile’ bodies” (Foucault 1977: 138) that reinforce a liberal understanding of self.

#### <<Opt>>

#### The role of the judge is to act as a critical educator combating oppression—while obviously signing the ballot won’t make ableism disappear, voting for strategies to combat oppression *in this round* makes us better activists in the future.

Giroux 13 (Henry, American scholar and cultural critic. One of the founding theorists of critical pedagogy in the United States, he is best known for his pioneering work in public pedagogy, “Public Intellectuals Against the Neoliberal University,” 29 October 2013, http://www.truth-out.org/opinion/item/19654-public-intellectuals-against-the-neoliberal-university)//ghs-VA

Increasingly, as universities are shaped by an audit culture, the call to be objective and impartial, whatever one's intentions, can easily echo what George Orwell called the official truth or the establishment point of view. Lacking a self-consciously democratic political focus, teachers are often reduced, or reduce themselves, to the role of a technician or functionary engaged in formalistic rituals, unconcerned with the disturbing and urgent problems that confront the larger society or the consequences of one's pedagogical practices and research undertakings. Hiding behind appeals to balance and objectivity, too many scholars refuse to recognize that being committed to something does not cancel out what C. Wright Mills once called hard thinking. Teaching needs to be rigorous, self-reflective, and committed not to the dead zone of instrumental rationality but to the practice of freedom, to a critical sensibility capable of advancing the parameters of knowledge, addressing crucial social issues, and connecting private troubles and public issues. In opposition to the instrumental model of teaching, with its conceit of political neutrality and its fetishization of measurement, I argue that academics should combine the mutually interdependent roles of critical educator and active citizen. This requires finding ways to connect the practice of classroom teaching with important social problems and the operation of power in the larger society while providing the conditions for students to view themselves as critical agents capable of making those who exercise authority and power answerable for their actions. Higher education cannot be decoupled from what Jacques Derrida calls a democracy to come, that is, a democracy that must always "be open to the possibility of being contested, of contesting itself, of criticizing and indefinitely improving itself."33 Within this project of possibility and impossibility, critical pedagogy must be understood as a deliberately informed and purposeful political and moral practice, as opposed to one that is either doctrinaire, instrumentalized or both. Moreover, a critical pedagogy should also gain part of its momentum in higher education among students who will go back to the schools, churches, synagogues and workplaces to produce new ideas, concepts and critical ways of understanding the world in which young people and adults live. This is a notion of intellectual practice and responsibility that refuses the professional neutrality and privileged isolation of the academy. It also affirms a broader vision of learning that links knowledge to the power of self-definition and to the capacities of students to expand the scope of democratic freedoms, particularly those that address the crisis of education, politics, and the social as part and parcel of the crisis of democracy itself. In order for critical pedagogy, dialogue and thought to have real effects, they must advocate that all citizens, old and young, are equally entitled, if not equally empowered, to shape the society in which they live. This is a commitment we heard articulated by the brave students who fought tuition hikes and the destruction of civil liberties and social provisions in Quebec and to a lesser degree in the Occupy Wall Street movement. If educators are to function as public intellectuals, they need to listen to young people who are producing a new language in order to talk about inequality and power relations, attempting to create alternative democratic public spaces, rethinking the very nature of politics, and asking serious questions about what democracy is and why it no longer exists in many neoliberal societies. These young people who are protesting the 1% recognize that they have been written out of the discourses of justice, equality and democracy and are not only resisting how neoliberalism has made them expendable, they are arguing for a collective future very different from the one that is on display in the current political and economic systems in which they feel trapped. These brave youth are insisting that the relationship between knowledge and power can be emancipatory, that their histories and experiences matter, and that what they say and do counts in their struggle to unlearn dominating privileges, productively reconstruct their relations with others, and transform, when necessary, the world around them.

#### The liberal subject constituted by the traditional ethics is assumed to be able-bodied – a focus on disabled people is key

Breckenridge 1 (Carol Appadurai and Candace A Volger, “The Critical Limits of Embodiment: Disability's Criticism”, Public Culture, Volume 13, Number 3, Fall 2011)

Disability studies teaches that an assumed able body is crucial to the smooth operation of traditional theories of democracy, citizenship, subjectivity, beauty, and capital. By assuming that the normative human is an able-bodied adult, for example, liberal theory can conflate political or economic interests with desires, political representation with having a voice in policy-making, social organization with voluntary association, and so on. Liberal theory naturalizes the political by making it personal. And the “person” at the center of the traditional liberal theory is not simply an individual locus of subjectivity (however psychologically fragmented, incoherent, or troubled). He is an able-bodied locus of subjectivity, one whose unskilled labor may be substituted freely for the labor of other such individuals, one who can imagine himself largely self-sufficient because almost everything conspires to help him take his enabling body for granted (even when he is scrambling for the means of subsistence). However, the mere possibility of a severely cognitively disabled adult citizen disrupts the liberal equations of representation and voice, desire and interest. Advocacy for the severely cognitively disabled is not a matter of voicing their demands. More generally, the intricate practical dialectics of dependence and independence in the lives of many disabled people unsettle ideals of social organization as freely chosen expressions of mutual desire.

#### Body focus is the key enframing in this round—it privileges layers of analysis far too often ignored in contemporary academia.

**Knoll 12**, Kristine Knoll studies Gender and Women’s studies at the University of Washington, Feminist Disability Studies: Theoretical Debates, Activism, Identity Politics, & Coalition Building, https://digital.lib.washington.edu/researchworks/bitstream/handle/1773/20505/Knoll\_washington\_0250E\_10341.pdf.txt?sequence=2

Alison Kafer also noted how **disability studies gave more depth to her cultural analyses of bodies, even beyond disability to additional bodily experiences such as queerness:** I do think that **disability studies has pushed me to think of the specificities of Bodies maybe in ways I don’t know if I would have otherwise**. I mean feminist studies and feminist theories are very much interested in bodies. And there are feminists who donâ€™t do disability who talk about embodiment and embodied experience, but I think **disability studies helped me see that more. It** actually **made me think about bodies in their particularity, about the different cultural weights different kinds of bodies bear, and about bodies in terms of feminist, queer, or crip resistance**.31 **Disability studies provides new layers of analyses for bodily experiences from the intersectional influences of sexism and ableism on feminism to the influences of compulsory heterosexuality and able-bodiedness on queerness.**

## 2NR

### 2NR O/V—!

#### I control the *largest impact* in this round—the constitutional divide at the heart of disablist modernity makes zones of exceptionality *the norm—*our society “purges” bodies that it deems unrecognizable, that is disabled people, people of color, and queer people—this culminates in genocidal violence. And I control uniqueness on their impact claims, abberant, disabled people already occupy a place of “ontological intolerability”—there’s only a risk that we make their lives better—that’s Campbell.

### 2NR O/V—Alt

#### The alternative is a *genealogical method to expose the way our discourse creates ableist norms*, this may sound vacuous so let me break it down—liberal ableist society is founded upon a framework of “unspeakability” to maintain its hegemonic power—by interrogating the assumed ablebodied norm underlying the AC, the alternative ruptures this unspeakability. Ableism is only strong if we allow it to be invisible underpinning of our thought, of what we consider normal—that’s Campbell

### 2NR O/V—ROTJ

#### The role of the judge is a *central framing question* in this round—the affirmative’s attempt to hide behind “objectivity” and reduce the judge to a “functionary engaged in a formalistic ritual” are strategies of liberalism. The judge must first consider the implications of the knowledge that we present in round before some imagined post-fiat impact—you must refuse neutrality in favor of voting for the methodology that best combats oppressive knowledge in this round. Academia has a unique role in cultivating forms of knowledge that counter ableism—that’s Giroux.

#### <<Opt>>

#### The role of the judge is to act as a critical educator, this is key-- two reasons—

#### While obviously voting Aff doesn’t get rid of ableism, we do take the knowledge we gain in debate out of the round—voting Aff affirms my method as a good form of politics.

#### Advocacy skills—forcing us to have a debate over methodologies combatting oppression allows us to develop advocacies skills that we can use to combat oppression in *all spaces* not just debate.—That’s Giroux.

#### <<That means that this debate is over methodologies to combat oppression>>

### 2NR L—AT: Language Focus Bad

#### They get the question backwards-- Questioning the language of the colonialist is key—our ignorance towards this type of linguistic imperialism promotes marginalization and dehumanization through neocolonialism.

Alam 2011 (Mohammed Sarwar Alam, Assistant Professor, Dept. of English Language and Literature, IIUC Bangladesh. “Illusion, Deception and Dehumanization: Neocolonial Reinforcement of Colonial Legacy and the Role of English” IIUC Studies Vol.7 2011: 55-62 http://www.banglajol.info/index.php/IIUCS/article/view/12259 D.A 7/26)

After territorial conquests, colonizers have been concentrating on devising techniques to consolidate colonization. And education in their hands has been the most effective and powerful weapon to marginalize, uproot, inferiorize and enslave natives. This is the way which has been pointedly defined by Gramsci (2007) as "cultural hegemony". In this respect, the objective of Macaulay's education policy in colonized India is a common knowledge now. Cultural hegemony reinforces political, economic and military hegemony. Thus, imperialists determined the history of the world and changed the events of our lives. Coloniality and imperialism are relationships that have had a cultural, intellectual and social impact. The very term "post colonialism" or "neo-colonialism" suggests that legacy of colonialism still continues. Now let us observe how neo-colonialism continues in the name of predatory globalization or corporatization based on the very logic of colonialism of the recent past. Khan sarcastically remarks, "We overstate how much we have been benefited by the subordination process of colonization, but fail to calculate how much we have been exploited because exploitation still continues". And this is deceptively defined as Development". (Khan, 1998:04) Now in the neocolonial global paradigm, states are being systematically reduced into security apparatus leaving the fate of the peoples to the profit- maximizing forces of the market. In a market- ridden entertainment-saturated world, neocolonial forces create and popularize sound-bites to confuse people and disguise newer forms of marginalization, deprivation and exploitation. These newer forms of recolonization or neo-colonization are openly supported by neocolonial propagantists like Barry Hindess (2001): Finally, of course, the world has changed dramatically since Orwell wrote his memoir... The great liberal project of improvement, operating now under the label of development, is still pursued by Western states but it has to work through a remote set of indirect means, relying, in effect, on diplomacy, national and international aid programs that assist, advise and constrain the conduct of post-colonial states, international financial institutions and also, of course, the market. Through neoliberal projects of confusion and deception Neo- colonization continues to be an unending hegemony. Gulliver-like corporatized Globalization is exploiting for the benefit of "a tiny and privileged minority" that enlist themselves in the club of the richest persons of the world while dispossessed and displaced number of people continue to increase more alarmingly than ever before .This neoliberal myth of development has been provocatively questioned through a set of questions by Ali Behdad (2006:): We may ask, for example, what functions do states, as agencies of representation, perform in the broader system of international regulation? Do global agencies and transnational corporations undermine the sovereignty of national governments? Or does the fact of their being answerable to their citizens make them the local shields against global capitalism? Can states recreate a sense of national identity in response to the political and economic constraints of globalization? Or, do state apparatuses mobilize the idea of the nation to enable the economic interests of transnational corporation? (73) This paradigm has got revealing expression in Arundhati Roy (2009:xii): "... nationalism and development those unimpeachable twin towers of modern, Free Market Democracy (...) encrypted with the potential of bringing about ultimate apocalyptic destruction (nuclear war, climate change). Through neocolonial global economic order peripheral states are being subordinated to defend the interest of transnational corporations. In Bangladesh, it is in this paradigm that we have lost lives at Kansat, killed by patriotic (?) security forces defending the interests of the transnational corporations. And, we often see that people struggling to defend the interests of the state are being prosecuted and persecuted by the state itself. Bangladesh is a "twice-born" country. Nevertheless, the country has been hardly able to decolonize itself. Rather, it appears that it is being further entrapped by recolonizing forces. This can only happen because of the marked absence of decolonizing praxis at all levels. And, we argue that the absence is created by the colonially wombed opportunistic parasitic educated middle class who are brainwashed by capitalistic class-biased submissive knowledge production systems. This is the class which has been abortively ruling the country since its birth in 1971.This is the "tradition" of the class "...that has never made decolonization one of their central tasks a tradition that has long been known for its ideological slavery, a tradition that continues to equate democracy with 'free and fair elections' instead of taking democracy as the equality of rights and opportunities, a tradition that remains tied to and even dictated by corporate interests and US imperialism , and in short, a tradition that has reached its creative-end" (Husain, 2009,1 ). Long ago, this fate of states has been predicted by Sartre that bourgeoise take- over of the states is fated to be parasitic on imperialism if national revolution is not socialist in nature (Fanon,1961:10). So, the parasitic nature of this colonially wombed middle class has given birth to two "passive revolutions" (Khan:2007) one in 1947 and another in 1971. Serajul Islam Choudhury puts it thus: "The state has changed in size and name but not in character, indicating that relationships within society have remained basically as they were before (Choudhury, 2002:1st Flap). We would like to argue that the absence of strong decolonizing and resistive discourses has led to fragile and colonial type of states that we are experiencing now. In this marked absence of decolonizing culture, we would like to briefly see the role of English language and literature. Here, we think, Pennycook (1998) has summarized the colonial language policy very well: Colonial language policies can be seen as constructed between four poles: first , 'the position of colonies within a capitalist empire and the need to produce docile and compliant workers and consumers to fuel capitalist expansion; second, local contingencies of class ,ethnicity, race and economic condition that dictated the distinctive development of each colony; third, the discourses of Anglicism and liberalism with their insistence on the European need to bring civilization to the world; and fourth , the discourses of Orientalism with their insistence on exotic histories, traditions and nations in decline . From amid these often competing demands emerged colonial language policies of many different hues that worked generally to bolster the economic and political position of Britain but which also operated along particular ideological position that gained sway in particular contexts.(68) To see, how these policies have worked, we would like to give two examples: One from traditional practice of language and another from traditional practice of literary criticism. From our experience, we have seen that many applications in our culture start with, "I beg to state that..." and almost invariably end with, "Your most obedient...".Thus; language has been, even post-colonially, an agency to indicate a subordinating position. Also, in the traditional (colonized) practice of literary criticism until recently, we have often uncritically praised and over-praised many of the canonical figures who happened to be colonial propagandists. They advocated empire's freedom that denied freedom to many turning them into 'wretched of the earth.' (Hussain: 2007) Terry Eagleton in "Literary Theory" (1983) has explained that English Departments have not been Departments of Literature only because of this monopolization of the British nationalism and its cultural hegemony (qtd in Norton :2089). In line with this view, Ngugi in "Literature and society"(1973), argues that in the dynamics of neocolonialism "Cultural imperialism" contributes notably in the fields of language, literature and education. Based on these realizations out of decolonizing necessity the views expressed in "On the Abolition of The English Department"! 1968) are provocative, exciting and of course , challenging. This is a quote from the paper: The English Department has had a long history at this College and has built up a strong syllabus which by its study of the historic continuity of a single culture throughout the period of emergence of the modern west, makes it an important companion to History and to Philosophy and Religious Studies. However, it is bound to become less 'Briitish\ more open to other writing in English (American, Caribbean, African, Commonwealth) and also to continental writing, for comparative purposes. (2093) Echoing the sentiment, "We suggest rejecting the primacy of English literature and culture to set our own goals. Here suggest a few initial points for our English language and Literature Departments: (a) "For comparative purposes" as is also suggested by Aijaz Ahmed as "Comparatism" (Ahmed, 199:52) we could introduce as many literatures as possible from different cultures with special priority for native literature which might include sophisticated translated works of indigenous cultures . Along with making us conscious about ourselves, it will save us from being marginalized into "fixed literary patterns". This will also provide scope for us to experience "contrapuntal reading" which has been convincingly argued for by Edward Said. (Qtd in Islam, 2004-5:179) (b) In principle, here we fully agree with the analysis and suggestions made by Fakrul Alam. In his essay, "Using Postcolonial Literature in ELT", published: "Imperial Entanglement and Literature in English". Echoing him, we would like to emphasize two points: (i) From the decolonizing perspective and to resist linguistic imperialism, " it (language) must also make an attempt to make our students grasp our history and sensitize us to the fact that language can be a means of resistance and opposition" (Alam,2007:384). Otherwise, it will run the risk of producing uncritical unimaginative, submissive and mechanistic language operators to serve Macaulay's colonial interests postcolonially. Since this is the practice Fakrul Alam appropriately opines, ".. .English for Today represents an opportunity wasted...". (ii) We can increasingly use our own experience and expertise to devise and design language syllabi at all levels reducing our subordination to foreign experts.

### 2NR !—Turns oppression

#### The view of some bodies as “less than” is the fundamental tenant upon which all forms of oppression and violence rest. We must resist the narrative coding some bodies as “abnormal”.

Siebers 9 (Tobin, Professor of Literary and Cultural Criticism @ The University of Michigan, “The Aesthetics of Human Disqualification”, 2009)//Miro

Oppression is the systematic victimization of one group by another. It is a form of intergroup violence. That oppression involves “groups,” and not “individuals,” means that it concerns identities, and this means, furthermore, that oppression always focuses on how the body appears, both on how it appears as a public and physical presence and on its specific and various appearances. Oppression is justified most often by the attribution of natural inferiority—what some call “in-built” or “biological” inferiority. Natural inferiority is always somatic, focusing on the mental and physical features of the group, and it figures as disability. The prototype of biological inferiority is disability. The representation of inferiority always comes back to the appearance of the body and the way the body makes other bodies feel. This is why the study of oppression requires an understanding of aesthetics—not only because oppression uses aesthetic judgments for its violence but also because the signposts of how oppression works are visible in the history of art, where aesthetic judgments about the creation and appreciation of bodies are openly discussed. One additional thought must be noted before I treat some analytic examples from the historical record. First, despite my statement that disability now serves as the master trope of human disqualification, it is not a matter of reducing other minority identities to disability identity. Rather, it is a matter of understanding the work done by disability in oppressive systems. In disability oppression, the physical and mental properties of the body are socially constructed as disqualifying defects, but this specific type of social construction happens to be integral at the present moment to the symbolic requirements of oppression in general. In every oppressive system of our day, I want to claim, the oppressed identity is represented in some way as disabled, and although it is hard to understand, the same process obtains when disability is the oppressed identity. “Racism” disqualifies on the basis of race, providing justification for the inferiority of certain skin colors, bloodlines, and physical features. “Sexism” disqualifies on the basis of sex/gender as a direct representation of mental and physical inferiority. “Classism” disqualifies on the basis of family lineage and socioeconomic power as proof of inferior genealogical status. “Ableism” disqualifies on the basis of mental and physical differences, first selecting and then stigmatizing them as disabilities. The oppressive system occults in each case the fact that the disqualified identity is socially constructed, a mere convention, representing signs of incompetence, weakness, or inferiority as undeniable facts of nature. As racism, sexism, and classism fall away slowly as justifications for human inferiority—and the critiques of these prejudices prove powerful examples of how to fight oppression—the prejudice against disability remains in full force, providing seemingly credible reasons for the belief in human inferiority and the oppressive systems built upon it. This usage will continue, I expect, until we reach a historical moment when we know as much about the social construction of disability as we now know about the social construction of race, class, gender, and sexuality. Disability represents at this moment in time the final frontier of justifiable human inferiority.

### 2NR A—Debate Key

#### Debate functions as a unique site of praxis that translates directly in politics, particularly in the discussion of disability studies.

Richter 13 (Zach, Grad Student in Disability Studies @ University of Illinois, Former Policy Debater, Disability Activist, http://stimstammersandwinks.blogspot.com/2013/08/gaming-and-revolution-gaming-as.html , 8/3/13)//Miro

The game which initiated me into being an activist is policy debate. The rules of policy debate are so complex that I still didn't master them after 4 years of hard work, so I'll get down to the details. In CEDA-NDT policy debate, teams of two debaters compete against one another using a variety of arguments. Judges arbitrate the winner, but debates are won by a largely strategic calculus. Debaters need to answer all arguments. Arguments that go unanswered count as a loss. The best thing about the current state of debate is that debaters are allowed to use a wide range of arguments. As a new debater, I started by supporting foreign policies toward Japan in some rounds and then finally moved on to using arguments based on the work of philosophers and critical theorists. The first philosopher I used heavily was Nietzsche, I then moved on to using Foucault and finally used queer and disability theory based argumentation in debate rounds. Debate is a unique situation particularly because the game is usable for overtly activist purposes. Not all games translate into politics so easily. I did become a disability activist after doing research in the area of disability theory in order to win the game of debate, but other revolutionaries throughout history have differing connections to gaming. Guy Debord, famous leader of the neo-marxist/anarchist revolutionary and art group known as The Situationists designed his own war game called "A Game of War" that took place on a board with squares and consisted of elaborate war strategy with lines of communication, soldiers and artillery. Debord was fascinated with war and war gaming and hoped to use his board game as a way that "revolutionary activists could learn how to fight and win against the oppressors of spectacular society" http://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/27323/le-jeu-de-la-guerre Elsewhere, some versions of the tabletop pen and paper role playing game Dungeons and Dragons have been innovated so that they could place players in historical situations. In Generic Universal Role Playing System's World War 2 game, one can play as the french resistance, for example. Elsewhere, some activists have used online games in order to communicate dire messages about genocide and other political events. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darfur\_is\_Dying What is becoming elaborately clear is that gaming does function as training for activism and revolution, both through a content focus which communicates important political messages and through strategy which forces research or critical thinking in the player. Games have, since they have existed, been used by dominant state and capitalist interests to naturalize competition and to distract players from politics, but it doesn't always have to be like this. Debord, master game designer and revolutionary, advocates detournement or the combination of various media items with an activist message to confront assumptions.

## Topic Links

### L—Med Industrial Complex

#### The medical industrial complex is *irredeemable*—the 1ACs affirmation of medicalization while ignoring the lived experiences of disabled people affected by this system *every day* reinforces ableist violence.

Peace 9 (William Peace, PhD 1992 in anthropology Columbia University, Interested in disability rights and bioethics, “The Medical Industrial Complex: Normalcy Rules!”, 2009)//Miro

I wish I could write that I have the solution to our health care woes. However, no single individual is that smart; not even Peter Singer, the media darling who has an insidinary impact on the health care debate. To me, the problem with our health care system is directly related to the human penchant to fit into the mainstream, to be normal, that is healthy. This thought came to me after reading Stephen Kuusisto's post "What Disability Knows: Part One and Part Two" (see Planet of the Blind). Kuusisto points out that all those with a visible disability can never be perceived as normal. Disability is thus mistakenly married to normativity. Divorce is not possible. I, and many others who study disability, agree. The stigma attached to the calamity known as disability is as unfortunate as it is unnecessary. We humans are a diverse bunch and this diversity is the essence of our strength. Yet we fear difference and particularly disability. In disability I see only potential, adaptation, and the best that humanity has to offer. I do not see illness, infirmity, or limits. In Kuusisto's estimation the idea of normal or mainstream is destructive and he recently "told a group of artists and advocates for people with disabilities at the Kennedy Center for the Arts in Washington, DC that the mainstream is one of the great, tragic ideas of our time. There is no mainstream. No one is physically solid, reliable, capable as a solo act, protected against catastrophe; there is only the stream in which each one of us must work to find solace in meaning". This is not only eloquent writing but brilliant thinking in terms of health care: who decides what is "normal" or "mainstream"? The answer is as simple as it is dangerous: the medical industrial complex. The medical industrial complex is much like the military industrial complex I study in my historical work about anthropology. For a military industrial complex to exist, war or the fear of war must be present. Since 1941, the attack on Pearl Harbor and the more recent events of September 11, 2001 we have had an abundance of fear mongering and war. In the medical industrial complex fear is required as well. What do we humans fear? Ill-health, disease, the absence of normalcy and disability. Ill-health is why the medical industrial complex exists. The sick, infirm, and disabled are the primary consumers. The big bucks and profit is in abnormality, exactly what we fear. Healthy people, the mainstream, need not apply. Healthy people are the worst customers. What I want to know is how do we determine what is normal? Who is normal and why are they normal? As one who has not been perceived to be "normal" in thirty years I ask this question because I know power rests among the normate to use Rose Marie Garland-Thompson's awkward term. The normates define and control what it means to be different. These people, normates, dictate not only what is healthy but how ill health is treated. Certain illnesses carry great stigma, AIDS for instance, while others are deemed so rare they are not worth researching (think ALS or Lou Gehrig's Disease). This is why disability studies has much to offer the debate about our health care system--our bodies, disabled bodies, have been medicalized. Disability studies is the one field that is devoted to this subject in the form of why. Why is the disabled body so objectionable? What are the practical and theoretical implications of the rejection of the disabled body? Policy makers, if they were smart, would listen carefully to what disability studies scholars have to say. We people with a disability are the best customers of the medical industrial complex. The problem is that we people with a disability and by extension disability studies scholars are outsiders. The debate over health care is dictated by people like Peter Signer and others who want to get the most bang for their buck and know nothing about disability. I am not dismissing the great cost involved in disability. I am intimately familiar with this. Rather, I want to point out what many know but do not acknowledge: the greatest economic savings do not rest among those that are ill or disabled. If we want to save money and lives the greatest economic and human savings are to found keeping people healthy. Healthy people, normates, are cheap and powerful. The normate, those that control the medical industrial complex, profit from illness. The largest profits are made diagnosing and treating the sick who get well. Just ask anyone that has undergone basic diagnostic testing, medical treatment and been deemed healthy afterwards. The money, capitalistic profit and core of our medical industrial complex, is dependent upon abnormality. Money is made when the medical industrial complex finds perceived pathology. Our perception of what is normal has become increasingly narrow. The reason is simple--profits. The more abnormal one becomes the greater the profit margin. We crippled people have become too costly and will be the direct targets of cost saving measures. Worse, our costly asses are not valued and it is all too easy to moan and groan about the costs of disability and old age. Why treat an elderly person who will die in the near future? Why should an insurance company pay for a $5,000 wheelchair when a wheelchair for $500 will suffice? These sorts of decisions are short sighted savings and laden with value judgments that keep me up at night. If we want to save money this is what I propose: make basic health care affordable. Lower the price of medications for conditions such as high blood pressure so that even the poorest Americans can afford it. If we did this, perhaps what is known as the stroke belt among black Americans in the Southeast would not exist. Force people to live a healthy life style via gut wrenching taxes. If you want to smoke make it cost prohibitive. Raise the price of cigarettes by $10 a pack every year for the next five years and few people will smoke. If we don't want kids to drink soda and eat unhealthy foods ban them from schools. Tax soda and junk foods so severely they are unaffordable. I am not naive. I know we lack the resolve to follow through on my outlandish suggestions. I also know if we did it would have a profound and unsettling impact on our economy; in other words corporations would suffer. Our government will never let this happen and this is part of the problem I am trying to emphasize with my extreme examples. Disability has been eliminated from the discourse on health care reform or perhaps more accurately it is framed only as it pertains to "savings". That is disability is abnormality, costly, and must be reduced. To me, this is akin to targeting and eliminating what makes us so special and diverse. The advances in our medical industrial complex have created more diversity--I see people at adaptive sports programs that are amazingly unique. I marvel at the human spirit and adaptive ability we all possess. I am equally sad to know that physical and cognitive disability is stigmatized and there are times this knowledge makes me ashamed to be human. Let me make one final point in this long and rambling post. I am not opposed to rationing health care. I can live with rationing health care but I can only do so if all are treated equally. Based on what I read and sense, we people with a disability are in for a very rough experience. Disability scholars may not have all the answers or even some of the answers but they must be part of the debate. The elderly, chronically ill, long term cancer survivors, people with a disability all have experience with our flawed health system and yet they are not sitting down to talk with President Obama or his advisors. This has me worried. People with first hand experience need to play a central role in any discussion about the medical industrial complex. I do not see this taking place and cannot help but conclude the so called health care reform in retrospect may seem like the biggest corporate grab for wealth our nation will ever witness. And who will get hurt the most? Why of course those that are the most vulnerable.

### L—Autonomy

#### Autonomy is the ultimate fantasy of absolute able-bodiedness. Their account of everyday subjectivity underpins the logic that renders disability “ontologically intolerable.”

Hughes 07 (Bill Hughes, Glasgow Caledonian University, “Being disabled: towards a critical social ontology for disability studies, 2007)//Miro

Whilst borrowing from black culture smacks of cool and complicates but adorns the self-identity and existential coherence of some white people, non-disabled people are very unlikely to open themselves in a similar fashion to the ‘disabled other’, since it raises the question of their own vulnerability and embodied coherence and illuminates the challenges posed by the very existential questions from which they try to protect themselves. The love of coherence and order, the ‘natural attitude’ that people adopt to shield themselves from the vicissitudes of existence, particularly in our age of anxiety, forms a force field that keeps the threat of vulnerability, the approaching stranger, at bay. It is, to put the argument another way, the normative, invulnerable body of disablist modernity that is the problem. Indeed, the invulnerable self is a fantasy and form of self-deception associated with carnal ‘normalcy’. It is widely used by non-disabled people to create and sustain social distance between disabled and non-disabled people. One can use Tom Shakespeare’s work from the mid 1990s to develop this argument. Shakespeare (1994, p. 298) argued that non-disabled people ‘project their fear of death, their unease at their physicality and mortality onto disabled people, who represent all these difficult aspects of human existence’. There are two important elements involved in this psychoemotional and social process that results in the ‘disavowal of disability’ and its invalidation as a worthwhile existential status. One is psychological and the other ontological. The first is fear of physical frailty, bodily difference and social vulnerability that is projected onto the disabled other and the second is the process by which the social distancing associated with projected fear is frozen into a binary of being that embodies a hierarchy of existence. Ironically, the ontological insecurity of non-disabled identity is the original sin that pushes disabled people to the margins of the human community. Disability is not an outcome of the infraction of social norms about ‘normalcy’ but a product of the failure of carnal normalcy to take proper account of itself, to indulge in ‘bad faith’ and delude itself into thinking that it is exempt from the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. The problem rests with the normative body that does not want to be reminded of its own vulnerability or to admit that abjection and death is its fate. In this context the disabled body is troublesome because it ‘exposes the illusion of autonomy, self-government and self-determination that underpins the fantasy of absolute able bodiedness’ (Thomson, 1997, p. 45). Readers may have noticed in this very preliminary and adumbrated account of what a critical social ontology for disability studies might look like a measure of intellectual affinity with one of the key building blocks of the critique of the individual and medical model’s of disability (and ergo of the social model of disability), namely ‘personal tragedy theory’ (Oliver, 1990). This concept need not be reduced to issues of compensation, entitlement or therapeutic interventions (Oliver, 1996, p. 131; Kumari Campbell, 2005) but is closely articulated with the negative and invalidating way in which non-disabled people relate to disabled people and the threat that this poses to the ‘psycho-emotional well-being’ of disabled people (Thomas, 1999). Fiona Kumari Campbell (2005, p. 109) argued that, almost without fail in modern discourse, disability ‘is assumed to be ontologically , that is, inherently negative’ and ‘always present … in the ableist talk of normalcy, normalization and humanness’. The assumption that a disabled life is ubiquitously, even invariably, blighted and aberrant is spliced into the emotion of pity that underpins disability charity (Smith, 2005), into the ‘practices and effects of the law’ (Kumari Campbell, 2005), into conceptions and practices of care (Hughes et al., 2005), into the humiliations and violations of institutional life (Malacrida, 2005), into the order of things, into everyday subjectivity. One could go one better, extending the (recently researched) list of realms in which the authenticity of disability is implicitly or explicitly questioned, the blight of oppression felt and ontological recognition denied. It is the task of a critical social ontology for disability studies to claim authenticity for disability whenever it is denied, be it in the cold logic of Peter Singer’s

### L—Abortion Choice

#### Approaching abortion through a paradigm of choice leaves a fundamentally disablist society untouched—perpetuates oppression.

Smith 5 (Andrea Smith, literally the best—founder of INCITE!, “Beyond Pro-Choice Versus Pro-Life: Women of Color and Reproductive Justice”, 2005)//Miro

Building on this analysis, I would argue that while there is certainly a sustained critique of the choice paradigm, particularly among women of color reproductive rights groups, the choice paradigm continues to govern much of the policies of mainstream groups in a manner that sustains the marginalization of women of color, poor women, and women with disabilities. One example is the extent to which pro-choice advocates narrow their advocacy around legislation that affects the one choice of whether or not to have an abortion without addressing all the conditions that gave rise to a woman having to make this decision in the first place. Consequently, politicians, such as former President Bill Clinton, will be heralded as "pro-choice" as long as they do not support legislative restrictions on abortion regardless of their stance on other issues that may equally impact the reproductive choices women make. Clinton's approval of federal welfare reform that places poor women in the position of possibly being forced to have an abortion because of cuts in social services, while often critiqued, is not viewed as an "anti-choice" position. On Planned Parenthood's and NARAL's websites (www.plannedparenthood.org; www.naral.org) there is generally no mention of welfare policies in these organizations' pro-choice legislation alerts. A consequence of the choice paradigm is that its advocates frequently take positions that are oppressive to women from marginalized communities. For instance, this paradigm often makes it difficult to develop nuanced positions on the use of abortion when the fetus is determined to have abnormalities. Focusing solely on the woman's choice to have or not have the child does not address the larger context of a society that sees children with disabilities as having worthless lives and that provides inadequate resources to women who may otherwise want to have them. As Martha Saxton notes: "Our society profoundly limits the 'choice' to [End Page 129] love and care for a baby with a disability" (1998, 375). If our response to disability is to simply facilitate the process by which women can abort fetuses that may have disabilities, we never actually focus on changing economic policies that make raising children with disabilities difficult. Rashmi Luthra (1993) notes, by contrast, that reproductive advocates from other countries such as India, who do not operate from this same choice paradigm, are often able to develop more complicated political positions on issues such as this one.

### L—Dysphoria

#### Understanding trans difference as medical reinforces ableist notions of deviancy as dysfunction, the medicalization of society, and allows unabated oppression of trans people

Dreger 13 (Alice Dreger, American bioethicist and professor of clinical medical humanities and bioethics at Northwestern, “Why Gender Dysphoria Should No Longer Be Considered a Medical Disorder”, OCT 18, 2013)//Miro

Yet critics of the “GID” category respond that, in fact, the DSM inclusion of what amounts to their identities results in more harm than good. They liken the inclusion of “GID” to the DSM's former inclusion of homosexuality, saying that it medicalizes them and treats them as diseased rather than just different. They point to evidence from history and other societies that, in cultures that accommodate people who don't fit the usual categories of male or female, transgender people do fine without being labeled “mentally disordered.” Some of the most persuasive evidence for this comes from recent work in Samoa by my colleagues (and friends) Paul Vasey and Nancy Bartlett. In fact, in an article I consider key to understanding the issue, Bartlett, Vasey, and William Bukowski noted a fundamental contradiction in the DSM specifically where GID in childhood is concerned. Partly because of the history of the de-medicalization of homosexuality, the DSM specifically defines mental disorder as constituting a dysfunction in the individual, not “deviant” behavior nor a conflict between an individual and his or her society. Yet the current DSM allows children who are merely notably gender atypical in their family's culture to be labeled as having a mental disorder, even though in another society (say, Samoa), they might be considered perfectly acceptable. That sure does look a lot like the history of the de-medicalization of homosexuality. Importantly, the increasingly nasty discourse surrounding the GID-DSM question obscures points on which both sides do actually agree. Most critics and most proponents of the “GID” inclusion want high-quality, safe, individualized care for people who are transgender. Most also want to see systems where such care is financed through public or private insurance, particularly for those who cannot pay for it themselves. Perhaps most significantly, almost all want to see transgender people suffer less, not more, stigma and shame. Thus the people arguing back and forth may disagree on the methods to achieve these goals, but not on the goals themselves. That's good news. So, what to do? Keeping “GID” in the DSM is problematic for many reasons. At least in this country, categorizing transgender people as “mentally disordered” leaves them in a sort of Never Never Land legislatively. In spite of being labeled “mentally disordered,” trans people have been specifically exempted from the Americans With Disabilities Act as a protected group, and their medical care (including hormones and surgeries) are not covered by most insurance systems, despite the fact that studies have repeatedly shown well-screened transgender people are better off psychologically and socially after hormonal and surgical transition. Meanwhile, a number of legislators have used the fact that transgender counts as a "mental disorder" to exclude transgender people from identity-based protective legislation available to gay, lesbian, and bisexual people, so that transgender people are not protected in many venues from housing and employment discrimination, and their murders are not recognized as hate crimes, in spite of much evidence that that's exactly what they are. So transgender Americans are seen as too sick to be protected, but not too sick to be provided help! Now that's a sick system. On top of that, keeping “GID” in the DSM marks all transgender people as mentally disordered, no matter how well they are functioning, no matter how sensible they are about dealing with the challenges of being transgender. As philosopher Jake Hale has pointed out, the way the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) “standards of care” work, transgender people are treated as incompetent until proven otherwise—quite the opposite of pretty much all other humans. One response to this is to say, well, if you have a male body and feel you're more of a female, then obviously you're sick. But as an historian, I can't help but remember all the gay men who were told loving men made them sick, nor can I forget all my feminist foremothers who were told—when they demanded education, professions, and voting rights—that they were mentally ill.

#### Dysphoria framing replicates trans oppression and perpetuates disablist enframing.

Finch 13 (Sam Dylan Finch, trans activist, “Not All Transgender People Have Dysphoria – And Here Are 6 Reasons Why That Matters”, August 13, 2015)//Miro

If someone came up to you and asked you what it was like to be transgender, it probably wouldn’t be as simple as saying, “It’s terrible.” It can be terrible. The pain can be very real. But for most people, being trans is a very complicated thing that involves a whole spectrum of emotions. This is kind of where using dysphoria as the exclusive defining characteristic of trans people isn’t necessarily an accurate way of representing the experience of being trans. As a trans person who does experience dysphoria, I can tell you that dysphoria is not the only thing that makes me transgender. It’s not even the bulk of my experience as trans. It’s about the journey it took to disregard expectations and find myself. It’s about the layers I had to peel away just to figure out who I was. It’s about the pride and elation I felt when I found the words to describe my identity. It’s about the sense of community I found with others like me. It’s the way that I understand gender and the way that I move through the world. Gender is complex. Transgender even more so. The thing that Kai and I have in common is that we underwent a process in trying to understand ourselves and our gender, teasing apart what society asked of us and what we wanted for ourselves. We both discovered through that process that we didn’t identify with the gender we were assigned at birth. The difference is that this realization doesn’t cause distress for Kai in the way that it does for me. And if that’s the only difference, so what? If distress is the defining characteristic, what are we saying about what it means to be trans? And what are we telling our youth, then, too? That who they are is contingent on how much pain they feel? I want to live in a world where transgender doesn’t equate to pain and suffering. Because ultimately, the pain we feel is not what unites us. It’s the identity we claim and the unique journey we each took to find it. I don’t want any trans person to go through this thinking that to be trans means to hurt. That only succeeds in saying to the world, “If you want to be in pain, be trans. If you want to be happy, be cis.” We are so much more than that. Our lives and our experiences are so, so much more. 5. We Privilege Some Narratives Over Others I’ve been told before that I’m not “trans enough.” I was hurting so much the first time I heard it that I actually blogged about it (this was, pretty ironically, before I understood the asterisk is problematic). As a genderqueer writer, I’ve been told more than once that I have no business writing about the transgender community because I’m not “actually trans.” And since I experienced that kind of invalidation, I’ve been sitting pretty comfortably in the camp of “everyone is trans enough and your gatekeeping is bullshit.” At what point will we stop tearing each other apart and start lifting each other up? I know what it feels like to have an identity that completely opened up your mind and your world, something that gave you new life and a sense of home, come crumbling down at the accusation that you’re not actually trans and, instead, just following the latest trend. I’m just not interested in creating a power dynamic where some trans people are inherently better, more worthy, more trans, or more important than other trans people. That, to me, is not what social justice looks like. Using dysphoria as the ultimate measure of transness means that any trans person for whom dysphoria is not present, not the language or framework they prefer to use, or not significant in their experience is suddenly invalid. It says, “These trans people are the real trans people, and everyone else should be quiet.” Our community has a history of doing this. Take, for instance, the transgender community’s initial resistance to including non-binary people. Oh wait, that’s not history. That still happens. I’m fed up with the power dynamics in our community and see absolutely no need to create more; we are still struggling day after day to dismantle the hierarchies that already exist. We can already see the ways that certain narratives are privileged over others, the ways that certain voices are heard and others are silenced. And frankly, I don’t want to be a part of that. I think we should be disrupting those narratives – not going along with them. We should be affirming that the trans community is diverse, complex, and unique – not monolithic and homogenous. 6. It Breeds Transphobia There is a pervasive fear that if we leave “transgender” as a term that relies on self-identification, it will be rendered meaningless by people who claim it for the wrong reasons. But this weirdly mirrors a lot of oppressive attitudes that are used against all trans people. Take the trans bathroom debate, for instance. There is a widespread belief that cis people will pretend to be trans just to get into the wrong restroom and violate other people. Um, when you’re on the side of Fox News, maybe it’s time to reevaluate your stance. If trans people interrogate other trans people with disbelief, we are giving permission to the rest of the world to do it to us. If we bully trans people and tell them they are deceiving other people, or following a fad, we’re telling cis people that they can accuse us of being imposters, too. We’re taking away the right to self-identify and giving the rest of the world permission to misgender us if they, too, decide we’re not “trans enough.” We tell the rest of the world that they don’t have to believe us because we don’t believe in each other. If you don’t believe a trans person when they say that they are trans, why should a cis person believe you?

## Rhetoric Links

### Key cards

#### That turns the case – they give the illusion of change without anything meanful

Cherney, Wayne State University, 11

[James, 2011, Disabilities Study Quarterly, “The Rhetoric of Ableism”, Vol. 31 No. 3, <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/1665/1606>, Accessed 7-5-14, CX]

In this essay I analyze ableism as a rhetorical problem for three reasons. First, ableist culture sustains and perpetuates itself via rhetoric; the ways of interpreting disability and assumptions about bodies that produce ableism are learned. The previous generation teaches it to the next and cultures spread it to each other through modes of intercultural exchange. Adopting a rhetorical perspective to the problem of ableism thus exposes the social systems that keep it alive. This informs my second reason for viewing ableism as rhetoric, as revealing how it thrives suggests ways of curtailing its growth and promoting its demise. Many of the strategies already adopted by disability rights activists to confront ableism explicitly or implicitly address it as rhetoric. Public demonstrations, countercultural performances, autobiography, transformative histories of disability and disabling practices, and critiques of ableist films and novels all apply rhetorical solutions to the problem. Identifying ableism as rhetoric and exploring its systems dynamic reveals how these corrective practices work. We can use such information to refine the successful techniques, reinvent those that fail, and realize new tactics. Third, I contend that any means of challenging ableism must eventually encounter its rhetorical power. As I explain below, ableism is that most insidious form of rhetoric that has become reified and so widely accepted as common sense that it denies its own rhetoricity—it "goes without saying." To fully address it we must name its presence, for cultural assumptions accepted uncritically adopt the mantle of "simple truth" and become extremely difficult to rebut. As the neologism "ableism" itself testifies, we need new words to reveal the places it resides and new language to describe how it feeds. Without doing so, ableist ways of thinking and interpreting will operate as the context for making sense of any acts challenging discrimination, which undermines their impact, reduces their symbolic potential, and can even transform them into superficial measures that give the appearance of change yet elide a recalcitrant ableist system.

#### Ableist metaphors are not floating signifiers, they represent and perpetuate real suffering

Ben-Moshe, University of Toledo Disabilities Studies Assistant Professor, 2005

[Liat, 2005, ““Lame Idea”: Disabling Language in the Classroom,” Building Pedagogical Curb Cuts: Incorporating Disability in the University Classroom and Curriculum, The Graduate School, Syracuse University, page 110-111, KMM]

Using disability as a metaphor to represent only negative aspects of a situation is problematic. It is made worse by the fact that blindness, deafness, paralysis, etc., are not floating signifiers, but have real referents behind them—people with disabilities. When using disabling language, we do not only de-value the lived experience of people with disabilities, but we also appropriate these lived experiences for our own use. This means that disabled people have been presented as socially flawed able-bodied people, not as people with our own identities. As responsible instructors, we must ask ourselves, when was the last time we discussed disability in our classrooms, not as metaphors, but as lived experiences? The consequences of this exclusion are that most students know disability only metaphorically (unless they have disabilities themselves), and that we fail them as teachers by not providing descriptions of what disability actually means to the people who embody it. As critical teachers, we should counteract the use of disability as a metaphor in everyday language, in media and in literary representations. This pedagogical goal can be achieved by introducing more complex accounts of the disability experience through autobiographies, guest speakers or critical accounts by people with disabilities or by scholars of disability studies. To make matters more complex, we must consider that some of our students might have disabilities themselves. These can be hidden and not visible. When we use disabling language, we alienate our students from our arguments and from feeling included in the classroom. As a wheelchair user, I find that when people use terms like “crippling” or “disabling” as rhetorical devices, I am distracted from the discussions. I cannot listen to arguments that make their point by using my identity as a rhetorical device. When a student tells me, “‘I didn’t know what do. I was paralyzed,” I think to myself, “funny, I’m paralyzed, but I do know what to do.” I stop listening to my student’s complaint and feel offended by the conversation. When this happens, I feel “mugged by a metaphor” in the words of Wahneema Lubiano (1996). 1

### “Able Bodied”

#### Ignores cognitive differences and shifts focus away from discrimination

Clark and Marsh 2 (Laurence and Stephen, Disability Activists “Patriarchy in the UK: The Language of Disability”, <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/disability-studies/archiveuk/Clark,%20Laurence/language.pdf>, accessed 7/9/12, sl)

This term is also often incorrectly used, in this case to refer to people who are not disabled. This ignores the fact some disabled people, for example people with learning difficulties may also be ‘able-bodied’. Morris (1993, page x) explains: “the term non-disabled people is used rather than able-bodied people because the point is that people who do not experience physical, sensory or intellectual impairments are not disabled by the prejudice and discrimination which denies opportunities to people who do experience such impairments." Similarly the British movement rejected American terms that revolve around ability, such as ‘differently-abled’ and ‘temporarily able-bodied’ (Rae, 1989).

### “Blind”

#### Blind” implies being incapable of planning, being unable to comprehend information and regularly misunderstanding the motives of others

Kali 10 (Brilliant Mind Broken Body: Living with Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome, self-identified disabled blogger, “I am not your Metaphor,” October 17, 2010, <http://brilliantmindbrokenbody.wordpress.com/2010/10/17/i-am-not-your-metaphor/>, Accessed:7/6/12, LPS)

Blind - I bet you can’t count the number of times you’ve heard this one –  blinded by viewpoints, blind to miss facts, blind to misunderstand intentions, blind to misread things, so on.  It’s definitely a favorite metaphor.  I count short-sighted in the same category, as short-sighted originally means nearsighted (as in, someone who can only see the shorter distances, not the longer ones).  Similarly, long-sighted originally means farsighted (as in, someone who can see things at greater distances, but not up close – someone who needs reading glasses).  We use sight metaphors to a ridiculous extent in our lexicon.  And through all of these, we imply that people who are blind or nearsighted are incapable of planning, unable to comprehend the information available, so naive as to misunderstand the motives of others, and similar issues that have NOTHING to do with sight!

### “Competitiveness”

#### Their preference for competitive, economically productive subjects is rooted in ableist assumptions which reinforce all other forms of oppression

Wolbring 10 (Gregor, Asst Prof @ UCalgary, Faculty of Medicine, Dept. of Community Health Sciences, Program in Community Rehabilitation and Disability Studies, Dilemata, No 3, “Human Enhancement through the Ableism Lens”, <http://www.dilemata.net/revista/index.php/dilemata/article/viewArticle/31/46> Accessed: 2/24/11 GAL)

Ableism 1. Ableism is a concept used by the disabled people community and further expanded on by you. What is the contribution of this concept to the enhancement controversy? The term ableism evolved from the civil rights movements in the United States and Britain during the 1960s and 1970s to question and highlight the prejudice and discrimination people experienced whose body structure and ability functioning was labelled as ‘impaired’ as sub species-typical. Ableism of this flavour was defined as a set of beliefs, processes and practices that favours species-typical normative body structure based abilities and labels sub-normative species-typical biological structures as deficient, as not able to perform as required, as being in need of fixing. The disabled people rights discourse and scholars of the academic field of disability studies (for a list of disability studies programs see (Steven Taylor, 2003)) questions the favouritism for normative species-typical body abilities (Carlson, 2001; Finkelstein, 1996; Mitchell & Snyder, 1997; Olyan, 2009; Rose, 2003; Schipper, 2006; Fiona A. K. Campbell, 2001; Carlson, 2001; Overboe, 2007). The discourse around deafness and Deaf Culture (Burch, 2000; Abberley, 2003; Chimedza, 1998; Hladek, 2002; Kersting, 1997; Lane & Bahan, 1998; Sparrow, 2005) would be one example where many people expect the ability to hear and see deafness as a deficiency to be treated through medical means whereby many Deaf people do not perceive deafness as a deficiency and hearing as an essential ability. Within the disabled people rights framework ableism was set up as a term to be used like sexism and racism. However ableism is evident far beyond the species-typical, sub species-typical dichotomy. Ableism is one of the most societal entrenched and accepted “isms” and it exists in many forms such as biological structure based ableism, cognition based ableism, ableism inherent to a given economic system, and social structure based ableism (Wolbring, 2008a). The ableism’s that expects the ability a) to generate a high GDP and be productive and efficient; b) to consume products and c) to be competitive are just three ableism’s outside of the species-typical, sub species-typical dichotomy cherished by many. The favouritism of abilities furthermore contributes to other isms such as racism, sexism, cast-ism, ageism, speciesism, anti-environmentalism and other ism’s (Wolbring, 2008f).

### “Crazy”/”Mad”/”Insane”

#### Crazy is an ableist slur that carries with it negative connotations

James 10 (Rachel McCarthy, FWD (feminists with disabilities) for a way forward, “Ableist Word Profile: Crazy”, May 17, <http://disabledfeminists.com/2010/05/17/guest-post-from-rmj-ableist-word-profile-crazy/>, accessed 7/9/12)

Like every ism, ableism is absorbed through the culture on a more subconscious level, embedding itself in our language like a guerrilla force. Crazy is one of the most versatile and frequently used slurs, a word used sometimes directly against persons with mental disabilities (PWMD), sometimes indirectly against persons with able privilege, sometimes descriptive and value-neutral, and sometimes in a superficially positive light. As a direct slur against PWMD: Crazy as a word is directly and strongly tied to mental disability. It’s used as a slur directly against PWMD both to discredit and to marginalize. If a person with a history of mental illness wants to do something, for good or bad, that challenges something, that person’s thoughts, arguments, and rhetoric are dismissed because that person is “crazy”. If a PWMD is going through pain because of something unrelated to their mental state, culpability for the pain is placed solely on their being crazy. Even if their suffering is related to their disability, it is, in a catch-22, dismissed due to their “craziness”; the PWMD is expected to pull themselves up by their bootstraps if they want to be viewed as a valid human being. Examples: “I can’t believe Britney shaved her head. Crazy bitch.” “Not only is Dworkin cissexist, she’s fucking crazy!” As a way to discredit neurotypical people: Crazy is also often used to describe a neurotypical person that the speaker disagrees with. It’s used to discredit able-privileged persons by saying that they are actually mentally disabled – and what could be worse than that? Examples: “Tom Cruise is fucking crazy. Seriously, he’s batshit insane about Prozac, yelling at Matt Lauer and shit.” “Did you hear that Shirley broke up with Jim? She thought he was cheating on her.” “Yeah, she’s crazy, Jim’s a great guy.” As an all-purpose negative adjective: Crazy is often used – even, still, by me and other feminists – to negatively describe ideas, writing, or other nouns that the speaker finds disagreeable. Conservatives are “crazy”, acts of oppression are “crazy making” , this winter’s snow is “craziness”. This usage makes a direct connection between mental disability and bad qualities of all stripes, turning disability itself into a negative descriptor. Whether it means “bad” or “evil” or “outlandish” or “illogical” or “unthinkable”, it’s turning the condition of having a disability into an all-purpose negative descriptor. When using crazy as a synonym for violent, disturbing, or wrong, it’s saying that PWMD are violent, disturbing, wrong. It’s using disability as a rhetorical weapon. Examples: “They took the public option out of the health care plan? That’s fucking crazy!” “Yeah, Loretta went crazy on Jeanie last night. Gave her a black eye and everything.” Crazy as a positive amplifier: On the flip side, crazy is often used as a positive amplifier. Folks say that they are “crazy” about something or someone they love or like. But just because it’s positive doesn’t mean it’s a good thing. Crazy as a positive adjective still mean “overly” or “too much”. It’s meant to admit a slight lack of foresight or sense on the part of the speaker. Furthermore, a slur is a slur is a slur, no matter the context. Crazy is mostly, and overtly, used to mean “bad”, “silly”, “not worth paying attention to”, “too much”. Persons with mental illnesses are none of these things as a group. The positive use is not that positive, and it doesn’t absolve the mountains of bad usage. Examples: “I’ve been crazy busy lately, sorry I haven’t been around much.” “I’m just crazy about ice cream!” Crazy is a destructive word, used to hurt people with mental disabilities. It’s used to discredit, to marginalize, to make sure that we feel shame for our disability and discourage self-care, to make sure that those of us brave enough to publicly identify as having mental disabilities are continually discredited.

#### “Mad” and “crazy” pertain to someone with a neurosis- modern discourse uses these terms as dismissive ways to marginalize people-when we use ableist language we hurt those who have disabilities

Kali, self-identified disabled blogger, 10

(Brilliant Mind Broken Body: Living with Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome, “I am not your Metaphor,” October 17, 2010, <http://brilliantmindbrokenbody.wordpress.com/2010/10/17/i-am-not-your-metaphor/>, Accessed:7/6/12, LPS)

Mad/crazy – Here’s one we use to a ridiculous extent in our language.  I’m crazy-busy.  Work was crazy today.  …and then she just went crazy!  I am just crazy about this designer.  You’re driving me crazy!  The way they treated her was just crazy.  That idea is just crazy.  Political opponants are crazy.  (most of which you can substitute mad for crazy and get the same meaning)  Yeah, that’s not exactly the same as mad or crazy meaning someone who is experiencing psychosis (a break with reality) or neurosis (not a full break with reality, but having an altered relationship with reality).  These words originally mean someone who has some kind of mental illness, and are being reclaimed as such.  Most uses of crazy are dismissive, ways to marginalize people and ideas.  Using them for negatives has obvious problems, but what about positives like ‘crazy about this designer’?  Well, it still means ‘overly’ or ‘too much’ – when we say things like that, we mean ‘I’m excited about this designer beyond reason.’  See how even that seemingly positive thing slides around to a negative? Look, using disability as a metaphor tends to come from one basic problem: linguistic laziness.  There are SO many other words that can be used!  Foolish, ridiculous, thoughtless, senseless, hampered, troubled, restrained, naive.  Just to name a few.  When you use disability metaphors, you hurt those of us who actually have disabilities.  I am NOT your metaphor.  Find a new one.

### “Crippled”

#### “Crippled” is equated with useless

Kali, self-identified disabled blogger, 10

(Brilliant Mind Broken Body: Living with Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome, “I am not your Metaphor,” October 17, 2010, <http://brilliantmindbrokenbody.wordpress.com/2010/10/17/i-am-not-your-metaphor/>, Accessed:7/6/12, LPS)

This is something that has bothered me for a long time, and actually led to one of the very few spats between the boyfriend and I (quickly mended, once we both cooled off a bit).  I really hate the use of disability-based metaphors.  Hate them, hate them, hate them.  I believe that they’re part of what makes disability such a fearful, distorted, tragic cloud to people who are able-bodied. It’s all well and good to say they’re bad, but I think it makes more sense if I actually go through some of the more common disability metaphors so you can see what I mean**.** Crippled **–** this one gets used ALL THE TIME.  The city was crippled by an unexpected snowstorm.  The political entity is crippled by corruption.  So-and-so was crippled by a powerful emotion.  The poor are crippled by their lack of savings.  I’ve even heard references to people being crippled by scruples.  Here’s the thing – crippled has a pretty specific physical meaning – it’s a physical disability, usually related to walking.  What being a crip really means is that you have to get creative about how you do things and how you get around.  It doesn’t mean that you’re unable to do things!  I think these metaphors that tell us an entity or person is incapable of doing ANYTHING (or at least, anything useful) really emphasize that being crippled is being useless.  And as someone who identifies as a crip, I can tell you I’m damn well not useless!  I do a great many things, including my work at a legal center for people of limited means and my disability advocacy, that I think have a great impact on the world.

#### Their deployment posits disability as unworthy of the same consideration as racism of sexism and as the source of its own oppression

**Ferri and May 5** [Beth &Vivian, Ferri, Assoc Prof Disability Studies, Syracuse Univ and May, Asst Prof Women’s Studies, Syracuse Univ ‘5 “Fixated on Ability: Ableist metaphors in feminist theories of resistance,” *Prose Studies*, v27, <http://syr.academia.edu/BethFerri/Papers/160692/Fixated_on_Ability_Questioning_Ableist_Metaphors_in_Feminist_Theories_of_Resistance>]

The thread of connection across these examples is of course the slippage between disability and ignorance or the assumption that to be crippled is to be unable to move or act. In all of these examples in which oppression is linked to illness and dis/ease, *the analogies position the source of disability oppression as impairment itself.* Once again, there is little to no understanding of disability as resulting from social structures and objectifying knowledge practices that create disabilities out of corporeal differences. In other words, although racism and sexism are seen as socially produced, disability remains as an absolute state, both apolitical and asocial it is the source of its own oppression.

### “Human Nature”

#### Their arguments about human nature appeal to the able-normative body behind screen of false scientific neutrality

Cherney 11 (James L, Wayne State University, Department of Communications, Assistant Professor, “The Rhetoric of Ableism”, 2011)

In this article I analyze "normal is natural," a third rhetorical norm that obscures as "natural law" the ideological preference for things "normal." Like "deviance is evil" and "body is able" this warrant justifies ableist discrimination by providing rationale for subordinating disabled people. It works by deploying the idea of the normal body as a fact of nature, thereby absolving responsibility for employing it in medical, scientific, political, and religious institutions. According to this norm, valuing normal bodies and devaluing "abnormal" bodies reflects sensible awareness of the way things naturally work instead of employing questionable ideology. Presumably dispassionate and objective science that merely describes natural law presents the idea of the normal body as "objective truth." Normality thus becomes an inherent and relatively unquestionable characteristic, appearing against a framework grounded in scientific certainty. Historically, society often declaims discriminatory assumptions as scientific fact. As Robert Garland observes: "Modern science has often served merely to reinforce our cultural presuppositions."[22](http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/1665/1606#endnote22) Scientific or medical evidence can redefine what counts as normal because generally the culture considers these approaches (at least when conducted "objectively") to merely report "facts." In contrast, social criticism and commentary (particularly when conducted "subjectively") struggle for legitimacy. This tends to bury and protect the roots of ableist discrimination. As Abby Wilkerson argues, this division between the natural and the social works "to obscure the social origin of practices that differentially harm members of oppressed groups, while making these harms appear to be 'facts of nature.'"[23](http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/1665/1606#endnote23)

### Laundry List/Metaphors

#### Disability is often used to denote deficiency

Ben-Moshe 5 (Liat, Syracuse University, Doctorate in Disabilities studies, 4-1-05, “Building Pedagogical Curb Cuts: Incorporating Disability in the University Classroom and Curriculum,” http://www.syr.edu/gradschool/pdf/resourcebooksvideos/Pedagogical%20Curb%20Cuts.pdf, accessed: 7-5-2012, p.108, CAS)

Disability has negative connotations when used metaphorically, while the real experience of living with a disability can be quite enriching and empowering. In all the examples above disability is used in a value-laden way. “Lame idea” means bad idea or one that is not constructed in a sufficient and persuasive manner. When we call a notion or act “idiotic/moronic/ retarded” we are trying to convey the message that the idea or notion is ill-conceived, lacking in thought or unintelligent. When we describe someone as “blind” to a fact (for example, men are blind to sexist practices), we mean that they are lacking knowledge or have no notion of what transpires around them. “Crazy” means excessive or without control. None of these signifying phrases carries positive and empowering interpretations.

### “Listen”/”Conversation”

#### The listening metaphor is uniquely ableist – it knowingly excludes those who aren’t capable of participating in a conversation

Lacey 10 (Teacher, MA in English, “The Conversations Metaphor and Ableism”, 9/6, <http://equality101.net/?p=1886> Accessed 2/10/11 GAL)

In my [last post](http://equality101.net/?p=1809), I discussed how I might use the seemingly elementary activity of show-and-tell to introduce students to a foundational concept of college-level composition: the Burkean Parlor metaphor. Frequently expressed as the simpler conversation metaphor, this metaphor illustrates what thinkers, researchers, scholars and, most importantly, writers do: we listen to a conversation; we form our own opinions about this topic of conversation as a result of listening; we eventually add our own voices (**opinions)** to the conversation; and our voices become part of the conversation that others listen to and use to form their opinions. ¶ As I prepared for one of my classes today, I came across the following passage in a chapter called “Reading Rhetorically: The Writer as Strong Reader”:¶ The goal of this chapter is to help you become a more powerful reader of academic texts, prepared to take part in the conversations of the disciplines you study. To this end, we explain two kinds of thinking and writing essential to your college reading:¶ Your ability to listen carefully to a text, to recognize its parts and their functions, and to summarize its ideas¶ Your ability to formulate strong responses to texts by interacting with them, either by agreeing with, interrogating, or actively opposing them¶ (Ramage, Bean, and Johnson, Allyn & Bacon Guide to Writing, 5th ed., pg. 109)¶ Clearly, the conversation metaphor is a useful and important framework that has the capacity to help college students understand college-level writing in a new and more applicable way. This metaphor has helped me explain why we do research at all and how composition classes are relevant outside of the required course structure at the university.¶ Butafter reading this passage, it struck me that this metaphor — built on the notions of listening and speaking — might actually be ableist in effect. It might leave out many students who can still participate in composition meaningfully but who don’t have the ability to listen (or hear) or to speak. I’m not sure why this never occurred to me before. I’ve taught the conversation metaphor to students with hearing difficulties without thinking twice about what I was saying. Despite the ableist language in the metaphor used to present this concept, I think the concept itself is still valuable. So how can we modify this metaphor to accommodate for all students? The easy answer is to change the language and comparison involved. We could use the more situation-neutral language of rhetoric: the rhetor (who can be a speaker, a writer, an artist, a thinker — anyone who puts a message in some form out to an audience) takes in the messages about a particular topic of the rhetors around him/her, uses those messages to learn and to develop an opinion, and then adds his/her own response to the collection of messages surrounding this topic for other would-be rhetors to take in. This conception is rather vague, though, and lacks the benefit of a realistic setting to deliver the metaphor and to demonstrate that what we do as composers in college reflects what we do as workers, family members, citizens, and activists beyond the college classroom. Perhaps a more updated version of this metaphor would use the setting of an online chat room. Instead of entering a parlor — which is an outdated term anyway — to listen and speak to people already engaged in conversation, perhaps you enter a chat room where you read and learn more about conversations that have been ongoing since before other chat users were in the room. While this is a more realistic setting for the concept of participating in a discourse community, there are still touches of ableism (being able to read — though many individuals with visual impairment use devices to allow them to read either print or Braille from their computers) and classism (access to the Web and time to participate in chat rooms).¶ As the composition field continues to become more relevant as students engage with all kinds of texts and participate in all kinds of discourse communities, we who promote these foundational concepts must remain cognizant that we are considering all of our students. While communication is a human endeavor, we don’t all communicate in the same ways, and it is vital that composition/rhetoric make that basic fact a part of the daily work of teaching students how to critically engage with texts and contribute to their communities.

### “Paralysis”

#### “Paralysis” metaphor is overtly ableist

Gent 10 (Pamela, PhD – Special Education, – severe disabilities, in Stewart and Webster’s Problematizing Service-Learning: Critical Reflections for Development and Action, p233)

We have said students are "paralyzed perfectionists" (Higgins 8c Boone, 2003, p. 139), "feel paralyzed, unsure of where to start or what to do," (Maryland Student Service Alliance, 2004, p. 2), "become paralyzed by a sense of impotence, rage, and cynicism" (McNall, 1999), and "are crippled by an amazingly constricted frame of reference" (Barilen, 2003, p. 107). People whose impairments have resulted in paralysis would tell us that their paralysis is not the result of feelings, rage, perfectionism, or their frame of reference. They would also tell us that it is ableist to assume that the type of temporary inactivity suggested in these quotes is in any way similar to their own lived reality. While many of us would question the use of overtly racist or sexist language in our classrooms, we may never have questioned the use of such ableist language.

### “Phobia”

#### The Affirmative’s conflation of phobia and bigotry promotes phobia stigma and serves to provide legitimacy to claims that such forms of oppression are unable to be controlled – turning case.

Emily 11 (disability activist, phobic, http://eateroftrees.wordpress.com/2011/04/30/why-you-shouldnt-conflate-bigotry-and-phobia/)

Phobias are real things that impact the lives of many people. Bigotry and oppressive forces are also a thing that impacts the lives of many people. But they’re not the same thing. At all.¶ Specifically phobias are when something or other produces an extremely strong unpleasant emotional reaction, mostly fear or panic. You see a bee, and you completely freeze up and can’t move because the bee is going to hurt you (even though, logically, you know that’s unlikely and if it did the pain would be annoying and not serious)¶ Phobias are not generally taken very seriously. This is a recurring problem; wherein people will try to expose you to your phobia for a variety of reasons, possibly because they think you need exposure therapy and have decided to skip the informed consent stage. Or possibly because they find it funny, or any variety of reasons. All of which are extremely ableist; at best trying to “help” you in a way that denies your agency, at worst outright abuse.¶ And further, people will often treat people with phobias very condescendingly. Insisting that you should just magically get over it or that your emotional reaction is a sign of weakness or any other variety of derogatory treatment for it. People will completely disregard the needs of their readers, and, for example, illustrate their writing with pictures of blood or insects in ways that make it hard to avoid said pictures; assuming that their readers emotional safety is just a concern to be casually tossed aside. (Further ignoring the fact, of course, that if you trigger your readers, they are unlikely to remain your readers.)¶ The thing is, the suffix “-phobia” is used for two completely different things.¶ One thing is phobias; which are a mental process that is rather disruptive and tends to preclude clear thinking. The other is bigotry. Bigotry is hate. It’s treating people as less than human. It’s systematically denying people basic rights and disrupting their lives.¶ But it’s not a phobia.¶ Calling it one gives reasonability to the panic defense; when someone claims that they just panicked because the victim of a hate crime was different and that made them commit said crime. Because phobias do result in an inability to think clearly, although they don’t usually result in violence so much as hiding. Further calling bigotry a phobia serves to make oppressors sympathetic. After all, their bigotry is just an out of control emotional reaction. It says that they are the ones who are suffering, not the people who they are oppressing.¶ Using “-phobia” to discuss bigotry shames phobias as well. Telling people that their emotional reactions are as bad as forces that systematically dehumanize and kill people on a regular basis prevents people from being able to discuss their reactions without being read as terrible people. It prevents people from being able to deal with their phobias in useful ways, whether by avoiding them or by attempting to find treatment for them. It encourages people to hurt themselves by entering painful situations and ignoring the pain, because the pain is seen as a manifestation of their own personal failures. Using “-phobia” for bigotry is an example of bigotry and is definitely oppressive.¶ This becomes especially a problem because occasionally oppression and phobias overlap. If you spend your life shamed for expressing a personality trait or because of your mind, and are constantly harassed and demeaned because of something about you, and see people around you who exhibit said trait be harassed and treated as jokes or disguisting or terrible people, you can quickly develop a phobia of said trait.¶ But then, when you have that reaction, everyone around you uses the words to describe your reaction to describe the people who hate you. Who’s oppression has caused this reaction in the first place. You have panic attacks when you try to transition because you’ve been bombarded by messages that trans people are terrible and freaks. Only then, you can’t talk about it. You can’t say “Oh hey I have a phobia of being trans” because transphobia isn’t anxiety about stepping outside of prescribed gender roles, it’s oppression of people who do that. Calling oppression of trans people transphobia is likely to be oppressive to trans people.¶ Fighting bigotry with bigotry isn’t just helping one group at the expense of another, it’s hurting the group you’re trying to help, and makes their oppressors sympathetic. This is, understandably, problematic.¶ Further, there are relatively reasonable replacements for many common “-phobia” terms, that often serve better to explain what the oppressive forces are. For example, cissexism much more clearly encompasses all the manifestations of oppression and erasure of transness, not merely the overt violence.¶ Monosexism, cissexism, and heterosexism are all words that much more clearly discuss how erasure and normativizing one group at the expense of others is a problematic element of society.¶ (In addition, replacing “phobia” with “-hate” or “-bigotry” can serve to allow discussion of specifically more overt violence, or in cases where there isn’t such an obvious replacement term.)

#### "Phobia" language rejects discrimination by appealing to more ingrained forms of discrimination and blames individuals – prevents large scale change.

Bigotry is Not A Mental Illness 11 ("a group of trans\*, queer, disabled SJ activists with phobias", http://bigotryisnotamentalillness.tumblr.com/post/6879014494/needing-the-term-homophobia-and-other-ways-to DH)

But what activists who claim that we “need the word homophobia” are really saying is that “homophobia” is a much stronger term than “heterosexism.” And it is, and we need to be able to have a word for hate crimes and Tracy Morgan’s rant and the fact that our youth are 4 times more likely to be homeless and unaccompanied that doesn’t sound clinical or overly-academic. But the reason we don’t jump straight to terms like “hetero-suprmacy” or “anti-queer” or “queer-hate” is because none of these terms are genuinely as pathologized and suggestive of violence as a [mental illness is](http://paristhroughthewindow.tumblr.com/post/6867812613/the-only-meaningful-difference-between-the-cruelty-and).¶ The fact is, people who have spent a large amount of time arguing that “homophobia” is an irreplaceable term are either willfully ignorant or simply frustrated that none of the new suggestions—even though all of them harken back to bigotry or hatred—can convey the stigma that “lol you’re crazy” can. “Phobia” language is a way of placing the blame on the bigot and not the culture or the people who are being oppressed. But it does this by playing off of our understanding of mental illnesses as things that are embarrassing to have, likely to result in violence, and a drain or deviation from healthy, “sane” society.

### Schizophrenia

#### Their attempt to create mental illness in opposition to rationality reifies systems of domination and should be rejected

May & Ferri 5 (Vivian M, Beth A, Syracuse Feminism and Disability studies Professors “Fixated on Ability: Questioning Ableist Metaphors in Feminist Theories of Resistance,” 2005, Prose Studies, Vol. 27, No. 1&2 April-August 2005, pp. 120-140)

Equating visual acuity with knowing is one common way to place disability in opposition to knowledge. But many others are equally as frequent, including dualisms between mental illness and rationality and/or characterizations of faulty knowledge models as “pathologies” or “illnesses.” For example, because Frederic Jameson relies heavily on ableist notions of schizophrenia and pathological illness in his critique of the postmodern subject, these ideas inﬁltrate Chela Sandoval’s reading and critique of Jameson. Sandoval writes that for Jameson, the “euphoria” of the postmodern subject“ marks the onset of a new form of mass cultural pathology. It is ‘schizophrenic’ in nature— charged with hallucinogenic intensity” (21). Similarly, June Jordan (in Collins, Fighting 150) describes constructivist approaches to identity as a “delusional disease.” In asserting her own social theory, Patricia Hill Collins writes that deconstructivist theory can be “crippling” because it “runs in circles” and fosters nihilism ( Fighting 189). Once again, disability is enlisted to represent foolishness and despair. Similarily, Susan Stanford Friedman, in querying whether a doctoral education in an interdisciplinary ﬁeld such as Women’s Studies is even viable, asserts “that way,madness lies” (318). Other scholars refer to those occupying opposing sides of theoretical or political debates as “mad heads” (Jamila 390), as “crazy,” or as “wingnuts”(Be´rube´). As these examples illustrate, schizophrenia and madness more generally are often placed in opposition to more reasoned approaches, arguments, or positions. Disability as a state of unknowing, or irrationality, is invoked in order to be deplored. Reading our own works, we found that Vivian discusses the “crazed” and troubled state ambiguity can elicit (May 366) and Beth discusses the “paranoia” about differential birthrates that Eugenicists tried to evoke (Ferri and Connor).Schizophrenia can also be used rather romantically, as a potentially liberating state of mind that allows us to think beyond given categories and binaries,to free ourselves from modernist impulses of mind or from “autistic” egocentrism! As Felix Guattari writes, “in a certain sense people who are operating on the level of social sciences or on the level of politics ought to ‘make themselves schizophrenic.’ And I’m not speaking of that illusory image of schizophrenics, caught in the grip of a repression, which would have us believe that they are ‘autistic,’ turned inward on themselves, and so forth. I mean that we should have the schizophrenic’s capacity to range across ﬁelds . . . of study” (Guattari, 83).Obviously, Guattari is not alone in this rhetorical strategy. If we were to tell the “origin story” for wanting to write this paper, it would begin with a talk given by Judith Butler in New York City reﬂecting on the events of September 11th in which she made an analogy between post-9/11 experiences and schizophrenia. 7 Because she was using schizophrenia to highlight the beneﬁts of destabilization, Butler could not fully grasp why her use of schizophrenia could be problematic. 8 Yet the trouble with this kind of “borrowing” of disability, whether it is seemingly positive or negative, is that in these instances schizophrenia becomes, primarily, a rhetorical device. Schizophrenia as an embodied lived experience, a social and political history, an ontology with meaning in its own right, disappears. Instead, it is transformed into an imagined state of dis/order available for using , for deepening the audience’s understandings of their own (able-bodied) lives and their own modes of rationality.

### “Take a Stand!”

#### Associating being courageous by standing up is exclusionary and works to reinforce ableist culture

McNary 10 (Oscar, Oscar’s blog, spoken word poet, This is What a Man Sounds Like, is a vindication of the rights of genderqueers, “Left of the Body Hatred”, January 24, http://thisiswhatamanlookslike.wordpress.com/tag/ableism/)

Students with disabilities are under attack. What do we do? Stand up fight back! This was one of many chants I heard the other day at a rally to end a local university’s budget cuts and support students’ and workers’ needs. Another chant mentioned standing with workers. So, here’s the problem: not everyone stands. The phrase “Stand up fight back” implies that standing, which normatively abled people like me are able to do, is a necessary part of resistance. Associating being courageous and working against oppression with standing is exclusionary, and it reinforces ableist cultural devaluation of people with disabilities and their centrality to liberation struggles. Here’s how the chant works: it goes through a series of different groups or needs that are “under attack.” So, the opening phrase started off, “workers’ rights are under attack,” then progressed through each issue or group of people. When the chant progressed to “students with disabilities are under attack,” I thought, “There’s no way they’re going to follow that up with a call to stand up.” And I was wrong. In this instance, the chant claims anti-ableism while using a normatively abled slogan. What does it mean to “stand up fight back” for people with disabilities? That the walk people (not necessarily all normatively abled) will stand up and fight for disabled people, while those who can’t stand will remain gratefully in the background? It implies that people who can’t stand are not capable of fighting for their own liberation. Now, I like the rhythm of this particular chant, but the word stand could probably be replaced with something less oppressive (act?) without doing much damage to the meaning or sound. I believe that with this particular set of organizations, I can probably communicate with them about this problem and they’ll work to make their chants less ableist. If ableism within leftist circles was limited to this one set of organizations, it could be corrected easily, but this shit is so much bigger than that. Across the continent, leftist cultures tend to take body issues less seriously than other issues of oppression and privilege. In the same way that a ubiquitous chant would incite folks to “stand up fight back,” can you imagine if folks yelled, “Be a man! Fight back!” or “Grow a pair! Fight back!” at protests? No? Oh, because sexism is taken seriously, and overt misogyny is not (usually, I hope) tolerated in leftist culture. Would we yell “Don’t be a fag! Fight back!”? Oh, no, we wouldn’t, because leftist culture values homophobia as a valid issue. How about “Act American! Fight Back!”? Right, we wouldn’t, because we think racism and xenophobia are for real. If leftists took ableism as seriously as we take sexism, homophobia, racism, and xenophobia, it would never cross our minds to shout about standing as an act of empowerment. If we took ableism seriously, we would never make our speeches from stages only accessible by stairs. We would not use step up/step back as a community norm.

#### The Affirmative’s use of expressions such as <<insert expression>> re-entrenches ablenormativity and a walking-centric culture.

Brignell 7 (Victoria, BBC radio producer and tetraplegic wheelchair-user, Dominated by Amublist Metaphors, <http://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/crips-column/2007/10/english-language-walk-stand>)

It’s a succinct, easily understood and everyday piece of terminology. I just wish there were a more appropriate verb for someone in my situation so I didn’t constantly have to be economical with the truth. The English language is full of expressions which are based on an ability to walk. Young adults are encouraged by their parents to leave home and “stand on their own two feet”. Successful business people are those who stay “one step ahead” of their competitors. Politicians “stand” for elections. If we feel we are being treated unfairly, we are told to “stand up for yourself”. When learning a new skill, we are advised to take it “one step at a time”. If someone is undermining our dignity or self-esteem, we do our best to “hold our head up high”. Certain job titles are rather amusing to wheelchair users. Broadcasting companies, for example, often employ people as “runners” – has there ever been a wheelchair-using runner, I wonder? When I was growing up, I had an ambition to become a stand-up comedian. For some reason, at the age of 10, that struck me as peculiarly amusing. Bearing in mind how walking-orientated the English language is, it’s not surprising that history is littered with famous quotations that convey an able-bodied perspective on the world.

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### !—turns oppression

#### The view of some bodies as “less than” is the fundamental tenant upon which all forms of oppression and violence rest. We must resist the narrative coding some bodies as “abnormal”.

Siebers 9 (Tobin, Professor of Literary and Cultural Criticism @ The University of Michigan, “The Aesthetics of Human Disqualification”, 2009)//Miro

Oppression is the systematic victimization of one group by another. It is a form of intergroup violence. That oppression involves “groups,” and not “individuals,” means that it concerns identities, and this means, furthermore, that oppression always focuses on how the body appears, both on how it appears as a public and physical presence and on its specific and various appearances. Oppression is justified most often by the attribution of natural inferiority—what some call “in-built” or “biological” inferiority. Natural inferiority is always somatic, focusing on the mental and physical features of the group, and it figures as disability. The prototype of biological inferiority is disability. The representation of inferiority always comes back to the appearance of the body and the way the body makes other bodies feel. This is why the study of oppression requires an understanding of aesthetics—not only because oppression uses aesthetic judgments for its violence but also because the signposts of how oppression works are visible in the history of art, where aesthetic judgments about the creation and appreciation of bodies are openly discussed. One additional thought must be noted before I treat some analytic examples from the historical record. First, despite my statement that disability now serves as the master trope of human disqualification, it is not a matter of reducing other minority identities to disability identity. Rather, it is a matter of understanding the work done by disability in oppressive systems. In disability oppression, the physical and mental properties of the body are socially constructed as disqualifying defects, but this specific type of social construction happens to be integral at the present moment to the symbolic requirements of oppression in general. In every oppressive system of our day, I want to claim, the oppressed identity is represented in some way as disabled, and although it is hard to understand, the same process obtains when disability is the oppressed identity. “Racism” disqualifies on the basis of race, providing justification for the inferiority of certain skin colors, bloodlines, and physical features. “Sexism” disqualifies on the basis of sex/gender as a direct representation of mental and physical inferiority. “Classism” disqualifies on the basis of family lineage and socioeconomic power as proof of inferior genealogical status. “Ableism” disqualifies on the basis of mental and physical differences, first selecting and then stigmatizing them as disabilities. The oppressive system occults in each case the fact that the disqualified identity is socially constructed, a mere convention, representing signs of incompetence, weakness, or inferiority as undeniable facts of nature. As racism, sexism, and classism fall away slowly as justifications for human inferiority—and the critiques of these prejudices prove powerful examples of how to fight oppression—the prejudice against disability remains in full force, providing seemingly credible reasons for the belief in human inferiority and the oppressive systems built upon it. This usage will continue, I expect, until we reach a historical moment when we know as much about the social construction of disability as we now know about the social construction of race, class, gender, and sexuality. Disability represents at this moment in time the final frontier of justifiable human inferiority.

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